

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-116 Canceled

117. (Currently amended) A method of removing an obstruction from a blood vessel, comprising the steps of:

providing an obstruction removing element which is movable from a collapsed position to an expanded position, the obstruction removing element also having a proximal portion and means for stopping distal advancement of the proximal portion of the element to prevent expansion of the obstruction engaging element beyond the expanded position, the preventing means being coupled to the proximal portion of the element;

advancing the obstruction removing element into the obstruction with the obstruction removing element in the collapsed position so that at least part of the obstruction removing element is positioned within the obstruction;

permitting the obstruction removing element, including the part of the obstruction removing element positioned within the obstruction, to move toward the expanded shape after the advancing step; and

moving the obstruction removing element proximally to further engage the obstruction with the obstruction removing element, the preventing means preventing distal displacement of the proximal portion of the element relative to the insertion element when the obstruction removing element is moved proximally.

118. (Previously added) The method of claim 117, wherein:

the providing step is carried out with the element including a helical coil coupled to an insertion element.

119. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[117]]**118**, wherein:  
the providing step is carried out with the preventing means including a  
stop on the insertion element, the proximal end of the helical coil being distally slidable  
on the insertion element until contacting the stop.

120. (Previously added) The method of claim 117, further comprising:  
providing a catheter;  
advancing the catheter into the obstruction; and  
positioning the obstruction removing element in the catheter; and  
the permitting step being carried out by moving at least one of the catheter  
and obstruction removing element after the advancing step.